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EXHIBITION OF PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS —Persian illuminated manuscripts are ever increasing in interest and rarity and the collection recently loaned to the Museum by Mr. Ambrose Cramer of Lake Forest is of high artistic value. Added to the finish and depth of color in the wonderfully beautiful miniatures of these examples is the calligraphy of which the Persians were unrivalled masters. The masterpieces of binding in which the works of the best writers were usually enclosed are particularly well represented.

Possibly the finest volume in the set is the Shah-namah or book of Kings by the celebrated epic poet Firdausi. It is a chronicle portraying the national history of Iran from the earliest Pishdadian ruler down to the death of the last Sasanian king about 641 A. D. This manuscript is made up of 700 leaves of native glazed paper, each page comprising four divisions surrounded by a border, while sixty miniatures multi-colored and enhanced with both gold and silver illustrate the principal events in the poem. The volume is bound in a contemporary lacquered binding with design in gold and blue on a red ground.

The romantic poem Yusuf and Zulaikha or Joseph and Potiphar's wife, (seventeenth to eighteenth century), is a small folio formerly in the Robert Hoe collection. It is written upon bombycine paper, two columns to a page, embellished with borders of gold and blue. There are 43 miniatures as illustrations and the binding is of red morocco with blind pressed designs forming panels in gold and color.

The manuscript of Nushirvan's Risalah in a Persian lacquered binding, painted outside and inside with orchids, roses and nightingales on a gold flecked ground, is a treatise upon mysticism and poetry. It was written on bombycine paper on an ornamented gold ground within lines of gold and colors probably by Muhammad Ismael al Shiraze, in the year 1234 of the Hejira. (c. 1818 A. D.) It contains 13 miniatures and many elaborate borders.

The Bhagavad-Gita or Book of Divine Songs, a Sanskrit manuscript of the second part of the 18th century is also elaborately executed but possibly not so interesting as a copy of the Koran of the same century. This is an Arabic manuscript written in small black and white characters with marginal ornaments and numerous blue and gold borders on bombycine paper. The old Persian binding is of brown morocco with sunken and foliage in gold.

The Koran of Bahadore Shaw, the last of the Mogul emperors, is inscribed "Taken from the Palace of Delhi from the King's Chamber, 20th Sept., 1857. The Coghill Fusiliers." Binding is lacquered outside, with arabesque pattern in colors on green ground with central medallion and corners in gold; and inside with bouquet of many flowers in colors on brown ground framed in with bands and small flowers.

Included in the collection are several lacquered and painted mirror boxes, and book covers with kings and courtiers, birds, flower embellishments and a series of single page paintings. B. B.